

Too many of our fellow citizens are suffering as a result of the biggest economic downturn in 75 years. In light of the number of Americans who continue to be unemployed or under-employed, it is essential that we focus our efforts on helping Americans find jobs. H.R. 3288 is responsible legislation which will help employ Americans, assist communities suffering from decreases in tax payments, and provide more stability to our economy.

H.R. 3288 would put an estimated 1.5 million Americans back to work by investing \$41.8 billion in improving our transportation infrastructure. The bill also provides 4.5 billion for commuter and passenger rail projects to help reduce congestion and provide more environmentally-friendly ways for Americans to get to work and travel. I am pleased that my colleague from Pennsylvania Patrick Murphy and I were able to get language removed from this bill preventing Amtrak from being able to offer discounted fares to commuters on the Northeast Corridor. Since it was first included in the 2006 Fiscal Year, this language prevented Amtrak from being able to offer a more than 50 percent discount off peak fares to commuters on any of its lines. This resulted in a 20 percent fare increase to my constituents. The removal of this provision recognizes the need to make public transportation more affordable and more accessible, and I expect it will result in discounted Amtrak ticket rates.

Our economy nearly collapsed last year because of the combination of reckless and abusive financial services and mortgage-industry practices, and astounding regulatory failures. To help re-establish real oversight and control over our financial markets, the bill provides \$1.111 billion to strengthen and enforce rules that govern investments and financial markets and to detect and prosecute fraudulent schemes, and allow the hiring of another 420 investigators, lawyers and analysts to support the mission of the Securities and Exchange Commission. The bill also provides \$292 million to strengthen the Federal Trade Commission's capacity to protect consumers and combat anti-competitive behavior. Additionally, the bill allocates \$118 million for the Consumer Product Safety Commission to continue implementing bipartisan consumer protection legislation enacted in 2008 in response to massive toxic product scandals, including children's toys from China.

The bill also provides \$1.4 billion for training and support services to workers affected by mass layoffs and plant closures, and \$125 million for competitive grants to community colleges and partnership with local adult education providers to prepare workers for careers in high-demand and emerging industries. To assist affected parents in ensuring that their children get good meals and quality health care, the bill provides \$7.2 billion for Head Start, an investment that will help nearly 1 million children from low-income families.

To help America's students pay for a college education, this bill maintains the discretionary portion of the maximum Pell Grant at \$4,860, which, combined with a mandatory supplement of \$690, will support a \$5,550 maximum Pell Grant in FY 2010. Since January 2007, the maximum

Pell Grant has been increased by \$1,500 or 37 percent--from \$4,050 to \$5,550. In FY 2010, more than 8 million college students will receive Pell Grants.

This bill maintains investments in math and science education by providing \$180 million toward the Department of Education's Mathematics and Science Partnerships. The program is the only national teacher development program available to teachers across the U.S.

It is widely understood that early language education is the key to language proficiency later on. In order to start addressing the pressing needs for skilled linguists and other language professionals that currently exist, this bill maintains investments in the Foreign Language Assistance Program at \$27 million, which is currently the only federal program that supports foreign language education at the elementary and secondary school level.

This bill also contains provision and funding for programs to protect Americans' access to health care coverage until national health care reform is enacted. To that end, the bill provides \$2.2 billion to provide primary health care to 17 million patients, of whom 40 percent are uninsured, in 7,500 service delivery sites. These centers provide high quality care in both urban and rural underserved areas across the country. The bill also seeks to increase the number of health care professionals by providing \$498 million to support the training of health professionals in fields where there are shortages, such as nursing. And to help find cures for the diseases afflicting Americans, the bill provides \$31 billion for NIH-funded biomedical research to improve health and reduce health care expenditures.

At a time when the recession has created a fiscal crisis for state and local governments, requiring them to let go of key law enforcement and related personnel, federal support for state and local law enforcement programs has never been more important. To help keep police on the beat, the bill provides \$792 million to support local law enforcement agencies with hiring, technology, training, body armor, and sex-offender enforcement management grants. This includes \$298 million specifically for COPS Hiring Grants to hire or retain approximately 1,400 police officers. The bill also provides \$519 million for the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program, which helps local law enforcement agencies engage in a broad range of activities to better fight and prevent crime. I'm pleased that this year several municipalities in my district will receive funding for projects under this program, including the Borough of Jamesburg (to modernize communications), the city of Trenton (for an anti-gang program), and the township of North Brunswick (for a video surveillance system).

Meeting our obligations to America's veterans is a national trust. The bill provides over \$109 billion for the operation of the Department of Veterans Affairs, with \$45.1 billion allocated for medical care. In a breakthrough long sought by veterans, the bill also provides advance appropriations for the VA to ensure a stable and uninterrupted source of funding for medical care for veterans, providing \$48.2 billion for FY 2011.

I am very pleased that this bill reflects a strong commitment by this Congress to provide robust, secure funding for science. The bill keeps the U.S. on track to double the funding for basic research by providing over \$31 billion for the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. An additional \$31 billion will support biomedical research through the National Institutes of Health. These investments in our science and innovation infrastructure will help create jobs immediately while stimulating the discoveries and investments that will ensure sustained economic growth in the future.

I am also pleased that this bill includes \$17.4 million in disability access funding under the Help America Vote Act, including \$12.1 million to help ensure that polling places are accessible and \$5.3 million for protection and advocacy funding. The bill also includes \$70 million in funding to help States meet the voting system requirements of the Help America Vote Act, and better protect and preserve the integrity of elections. This sum is much less than I requested, and it is less than the \$100 million passed in the House, but it will go a long way in helping States improve the administration of elections--the foundation of our Democracy.

Finally, this bill makes much needed investments in our foreign affairs institutions, including funding increases that will allow the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development to hire additional foreign service personnel to address the neglected staffing needs of these agencies. Key initiatives continue to receive vigorous support, including efforts to combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases, agriculture and food security programs, basic education programs, microfinance and microcredit, and the Peace Corps. I am especially pleased that the final bill recognizes the important contributions that scientists and scientific engagement can make to our international relations.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this critical funding bill.